

Follow me and I will make you fish for people

Sunday, January 22nd, 2023, Epiphany III

Isaiah 9:1-4 Psalm 27:1, 5-13 1 Corinthians 1:10-18 Matthew 4:12-23

In Isaiah we hear; *the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light*, and in Matthew; *repent for the Kingdom of heaven has come near*.
follow me and I will make you fish for people.

The hope for all of us to follow and to repent and fish for people the sense that we are in darkness still in darkness, yet we see the light. Repentance, the process of moving from darkness to light and fishing for people is walking with others in darkness to light.

Let's back up a bit, what does it mean to fish for people? Those who relish the use of this term in whatever translation they use seems to be about the end of the journey. Sense of arrival, an endpoint, and perhaps even a sense of superiority. But the reality is all of us are on that continuum between darkness and light. None of us are in total darkness and none of us if we're honest are in total light.

I remember what

Bishop Stephen Cottrell of the Diocese of Chelmsford, in the Church of England said at our 2014 clergy conference. I remember what he said, but I did not remember his name other than being a Bishop of the Church of England, and when I looked for his name, I came across this quote from

BISHOP PATRICK YU in the September 2014 issue of the Anglican.

It took place on the afternoon of Easter, on the road to Emmaus. You will recall that Jesus walked incognito alongside two disillusioned disciples away from Jerusalem. He listened to them, met them where they were, but also challenged them. When they were good and ready, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him at the breaking of bread.

What Bishop Cottrell wanted us to understand from this narrative was that before we can speak, we need to listen. Listen to the friends we have, listen to the culture and its hopes and aspirations, its heartaches, and disappointments. In doing so, we join the Risen Christ who is already walking with people, even when they think they are walking away from him. We only need to join in the action that God has begun. It is a humbler stance, not as people who have all the answers but as people who recognize that God is walking with us and care to point out to others this amazing reality.

This journey, this relationship with God in Christ and with others. This is an ongoing struggle and journey because there will always be darkness in and around all of us and let us not judge ourselves and others too harshly and let us seek the light of Christ in each of us. Amen.

Blessing

Go forth into the world in peace;
be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;
help the afflicted; honour everyone;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;
and the blessing ...